



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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School lunch, breakfast programs available through DPI, USDA

MADISON—Public and private schools in Wisconsin may contract with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to provide National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). All students are eligible to participate in these nutrition programs, and may qualify for free or reduced-price lunches or breakfasts based on income guidelines.

Families who receive FoodShare, W-2 cash benefits, or benefits under the food distribution program on Indian Reservations are eligible for free meals for their children. Families who meet USDA household income criteria can receive free or reduced-price meals for their children by completing an application available from their school. Applications are confidential and may be made at any time during the school year.

Schools that do not participate in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast programs may offer milk to students through the USDA's Special Milk Program, also administered by the DPI. Meals in schools and snacks in after-school care programs served through USDA nutrition programs must meet standards based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Wisconsin schools and institutions participating in child nutrition programs administered by the DPI received approximately \$180 million in cash and commodity subsidies during the 2004-05 school year.

"I want to encourage schools and school districts to participate in the USDA's child nutrition programs," said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster. "Offering school breakfast and lunch can make a huge difference in the lives of all children, and especially lower-income children. A hungry child cannot learn. These programs are a low-cost option that can help us close the achievement gap."

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NOTE: Information on eligibility for free and reduced-prices school lunch and school breakfast can be found on the Department of Public Instruction website at < <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dfm/fns/fincou1.html> >. Scroll to the section on **Income Eligibility Guidelines** and click on "School Year 2005-2006."